

unifan

2



KELLY FREAS
EUROCON IV
1978

UNIFAN

is edited by Ellen Pedersen and Niels Dalgaard and is published about twice a year by Tohubohu Press, Horsekildevej 13, IV dør 3, DK-2500 Valby, Denmark. The sole purpose of this is to trade with as many other fanzines throughout the world as possible. Thus it is not possible to subscribe to *UniFan*, but LoCs that are printed receive one free copy.

The editors assume no responsibility for material sent without a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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EDITORIAL

Here we are with *UniFan* 2, quite a few months late than we had hoped. And not only are we late: we have had to delete a good deal of material in order to get this ish out before too many of you started wondering if there was ever going to be any second issue at all.

The reasons for the delay are too numerous to list in full; but as most of our readers publish fanzines themselves, they should be perfectly able to imagine in what direction things have been going: first a bit of trouble with some people at the place where we do the repro-work for *CritiFan* (our serconzine), next a delay in the publication of our Danish serconzine *Pulsar* (The December issue out at the end of January etc.) and a couple of oneshots, and now financial trouble and lack of time, affecting *CritiFan* 2, scheduled to appear in February (1979!) but at the moment looking to stay out of existence until the beginning of April. Add to that a couple of exams, a strained work situation (having to fight unreasonable cuts etc.) and almost whatever else you can imagine. You name an obstacle - we've met with it! But, as you see, we're determined to fight back - to fight rain, snow (we've had quite a bit lately), frost, lack of money, and uncountable other hardships, in order to get *UniFan* out.

The material that we couldn't, for lack of space and time, include,

are mainly the letter section and the mentions of other fanzines. We are particularly sorry to have to leave out LoCs, but since we are so late anyhow, most of the letters are quite dated and have lost some of their interest. We are fully aware that trying to persuade people to write LoC's to a zine that doesn't publish them is hopeless; and we promise to have a fat LoC section in *UniFan* 3. Almost the same applies to the mentioning of the zines we trade with; a list of addresses is immensely useful for other faneds interested in new trade partners, and we've found such lists printed in other fanzines to be practically invaluable. But that should be fixed by the next ish, too.

In future we hope to publish about two issues a year. If a trade contact has received two succeeding issues of *UniFan* without replying in some way (preferably with a fanzine), we'll have to assume that the fanzine in question is dead or at least hibernating. The UniFans will then stop, but contact may be re-established again anytime by sending a fanzine or just a letter (or postcard) stating interest in the thing. This means, for a start, that anybody who has got *UniFan* 1 will also get *UniFan* 2. It also means that publishing one issue a year is enough to keep up regular trade with us. We hope to trade with as many different zines as possible, and we'd rather run the risk of sending out a copy too many than missing out on a trade. That's how we are -

if you know of anybody who produces a fanzine and hasn't heard of *UniFan*, tell him/her that we're interested. Personalzines, Serconzines, Startrekzines, APAzines, genzines, whatever - one of us is a collector, the other likes multinational contact of many types.

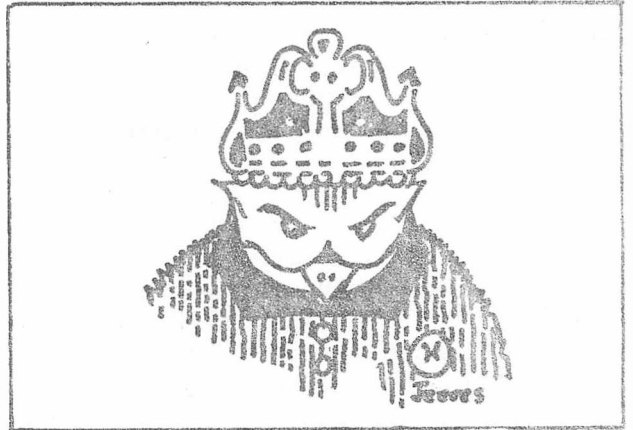
We've had quite a few letters since *UniFan* 1. Most of them said, curiously enough, that though *UniFan* 1 seemed rather nice, it was not a thing one could write very much about. Most letterwriters liked the workshop, though, and it seems that the piece about Danish fandom filled in a blank space in the knowledge of most fans.

If there was consensus about the content, the opinions about the cover art were sharply divided. About one quarter of the LoCs asked for more, the rest screamed please to stop printing those kind of things. So what we've done this time is to take another drawing by the same artist, and reduce the size. Hopefully, that will satisfy almost everybody.

As we said above, most of the LoCs liked most things in the last issue. But there was a tendency to wish for more serious material. In preparing this ish, we have tried to have some (while at the same time reminding the readers that this is our for-fun-zine; our serconnish interest (which is very strong) will primarily flourish in *CritiFan*). First, a conrep - which may not sound very serious, but it is a report from a rather serious con, namely Eurocon 4. We think that if we can provide a little communication about European matters to the large American readership we've acquired, then we will have fulfilled an important function. Secondly, a speech held at the very same con, dealing with the state of the art in Yugoslavia. We hope to make this the first of a long series; as the name *UniFan* implies, we think of science fiction fans as having something in common that defies borders. Therefore we think it would be interesting to hear about the science fiction situation in as many countries as possible. If you feel like it, by all means write us a piece about the

situation in *your* country!

This issue closes with a short story by one of Denmark's leading science fiction short story writers. We hope to be able to bring more stories by him and other up-and-coming Danish writers in the *UniFans* to come. Maybe some from Sweden and Norway, too.



You may notice a few minor changes in appearance this time: we're printing on another type of paper, which is not only cheaper and better but which also consists of more than 50 % recycled paper fibres. When reading *UniFan* you're helping to save our forests....besides the change in paper you'll probably notice a change in typeface. That's right. We've rented an IBM 82 C for better looks and faster typing. There is still a miserable lack of illustrations, though. We'd be delighted if somebody would send us some (as Terry Jeeves already has done), just remember that we work the electrostencil way, i.e. no big, black areas, please.

That seems to be all for now - we hope you'll find something of interest in *UniFan* 2, and that you'll trade with us.

Valby, March 1979

Ellen Pedersen · *Niels Dalgaard*
Ellen Pedersen & Niels Dalgaard

P.S. Hope to see you at Season!

Eurocon 4

Bruxelles
November 1-5
1978

a con report
by
THE EDITORS

It was a dark and stormy november. It was in Brussels. It was the fourth European Science Fiction Convention, also called Eurocon 4. We were there, among other things, to sell our serconzine *CritiFan*. We thought it would be a great con with a lot of participants. But....

As the name implies, this Eurocon was the fourth in the series. Before had gone, with impressive regularity, Eurocon I (Trieste, Italy, 1972), Eurocon II (Grenoble, France, 1974) and Eurocon III (Poznan, Poland, 1976). The idea of the Eurocon was originally conceived when the 1970 Worldcon, held in Heidelberg in Germany, became a tremendous success and attracted many more European fans than were thought in existence. A decision was made to produce a European event every two years, in varying countries, and on both sides of the so called Iron Curtain.

This has, of course, not worked out.

First and foremost a shocking lack of communication has run through the history of the Con. Nobody outside the country where the con was to take place has heard much about it. This of course makes for a mship composed chiefly of fans from that very country. The con in Grenoble turned out to be a French con with very few foreign visitors, the one in Trieste was chiefly visited by Italians etc.

Secondly, the site of the con has been a more or less constant point of trouble. The second Eurocon was supposed to take place in Brussels; but the hotel where it was to be held changed management. The new management did not go for conventions, furthermore they did not feel it was their duty to carry out any commitments made by the former management. So the con was transferred to Grenoble on a rather short notice. Combined with the

aforementioned lack of communications the result was predictable. The fourth con, the one we went to, was originally intended for Eastern Germany. There was general agreement that after two cons in the west there were to be two in the east. A promise was given by the East German representative in Poznan (The site of a Eurocon, as is the case with Worldcons, is decided upon at the preceding Eurocon). He had spoken too soon however: The Writers' Union of Eastern Germany, who would have been the organizers, said they could not cope with a Eurocon. So it was transferred to Brussels - again at a rather short notice - and due to little or no communication it became chiefly a Belgian con. So it goes.

The one exception from all this seems to be the third Eurocon in Poznan. It was organized by a state agency, took place in a large hotel, and worked out according to plans.

Something that *has* worked out is the duration of the event: five days, if possible. This gives better opportunity for seeing other fans and for talking more intensively with them. And going to another part of the continent for a five-day event seems more reasonable than to go for just a weekend. However, the Eurocons have tended to become more like sercon events than fannish relaxacons. The many solemnly presented lectures of interesting but rather dry content appear to be necessary in order to get the many different governments of Europe to view cons with some of the respect that is given to academic events. This makes for better possibilities, i.e. state subs. The Belgian con was by and large financed with subs from the two Belgian cultural ministeries (they have two, one for the Francophone part of the culture, and one from the Flemish part). And the deficit produced is expected to

be taken care of in the same manner.

So we arrived in Brussels, after thirteen hours of continuous train ride, some time in the middle of the night, only to find that the hotel where we had reserved a room (through the congress committee) did not know anything about our reservations. Well, we ended up in a room there anyway, since it was rather late, but of course it became more expensive than planned for.

Later we had some difficulty trying to tell *Madame* what the con was about, and what a con was anyway. Apparently somebody had told her this was a *conférence*, but since this in French does not mean *conference*, not even *meeting*, but *lecture*, she had the impression that we were spending all five days listening to lectures about --- guess what --- THE FUTURE! And to Franco-phone Belgians of the *Madame* generation it seems obvious that Jules Verne has already said what there is to say about that.

The next day we went to the site - or rather one of the sites - of the convention. Here we were told that our hotel reservations had been transferred to another hotel, and that they were sorry we hadn't been told. They were sorry! So were we, indeed, but decided not to take the trouble of moving our things.

The con was scheduled to last five days, with films every day, with talks and bookselling going on all the time, and with the more serious part, i.e. the lectures, put away at the official Translator's Institute down the road. These lectures took only place on two of the five days, and the reason for arranging for them to take place at the translator's institute was, of course, that they provided every participant with simultaneous translation in German, Dutch, Russian, Italian, English, and Spanish. No translation into Danish, though, and listening to a foreign language (even English) in a small ear receiver, spoken by someone with a rather heavy accent, is just not the thing. We sat through most of the sessions, though, and

can't say we regret it. We were told of the state of the art in various countries and were given a number of other interesting lectures on other subjects, such as the Paradisical in literature. This part of the arrangement did, however, suffer from the traditional malady: Each speaker was given approx. twenty minutes (because for some reason the programme was continually behind schedule) - and no times for questions and discussion. The speakers, many of whom had been preparing longer lectures, could not possibly stick to the allotted amount of time, and so the elaborate schedule broke down. Not that it left more room for discussion, though.

The Guests of Honour were A.E. van Vogt and Frank Kelly Freas. How this came to be at a *European* convention we don't know. But van Vogt is pretty well known in the French-speaking part of the world, basically through the Null-A books which were translated into French by Boris Vian. We have a growing suspicion that the translator's highly estimated name is the true reason for the alleged serconnishness of French fans. Eric Batard, the French *Seacon* '79 representative who had a stall next to us, told us they were all very serious and bound to buy a serconnish zine in bulk. The trouble then apparently seemed to be that they did not happen to be visiting Brussels...

Mr. van Vogt spent his 45 minutes telling us how Dianetics was the best therapy in the world, since its profit on a yearly basis exceeded 1,000,000 \$, and it was putting all traditional psychotherapy out of business, and how he himself had become a professional writer in the proper sense of the term, by waking himself up every two hours every night for the last 30 years. Obviously the ideal method for those who would have it that the basis of art is neurosis and that continuous neurosis ensures a steady flow of creative writing. No wonder the Mrs. van Vogt we met at Eurocon is not the one portrayed in Jim Gunn's *Alternate Worlds*.

Kelly Freas is a scoop at any convention - smiling, charming, entertaining, interesting. At one point

he began drawing sketches of some of the fans, and soon a line had formed of fans waiting to have their picture drawn. He also drew one of Ellen (used for front cover this time, with the artist's kind permission). Where van Vogt, apart from his speech, was little seen or heard, Freas seemed to be present most of the afternoons, besides giving a slide show of some of his best works.

There was a third GoH. Alexander Zinoviev, a well-known Russian sf author, was invited, through official channels, and the invitation was accepted. However, before the con took place, Zinoviev was exiled from Russia. This put the Eurocon committee in a rather tight spot; it was too late to withdraw the invitation (and nobody really wanted to do that anyhow) and the Eastern countries threatened to stay away if Zinoviev appeared. Luckily, they did not and so the con had at least the appearance of being a true East + West arrangement.

In fact it seemed that East Europe was better represented than the west (excepting of course the swarms of Belgian attendees). Fans and professionals from Poland, Hungary, Eastern Germany, Slovenia (which is not eastern, but unaligned) and other countries. But only two Swedish fans, two Danish and nobody from Norway. Too bad, really. From England only

Ken Slater and company were present, as the British Novacon was held in Birmingham at the same time. Mr. Slater is the well-known owner of the *Fantast* book shop, and did not want to appear as a bookseller on a Birmingham con, since this is the home of a competing firm, *The Andromeda Book Shop*. A few Dutch and a couple of Argentinians were also present, besides numerous French and Italian participants. It was an international con, all right.

The art section seemed pretty well organised - and some of the art work was extremely good. But the organiser of the film programme seemed to be convinced that the F and SF of the con's name stands for *Fantastique et Seulement Fantastique*. Apart from *The Man who fell to Earth*, which at that point had not had its Belgian opening yet, the films were of the type *Death Trap*, *Demons of the Mind*, *Exorcismo* (Spanish), *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* - need we go on? Combined with the fact that only one projector was at hand (causing pauses in the middle of a film, whenever the reel had to be changed) it made one wonder why so many people actually did go to see those films. There seemed to be so many other interesting things to do - buy books, talk to other fans, drink beer (some

THE PRIZES:

Science Fiction:

- Best European series: *Ailleurs et demain*, France
- Best European anthology: *Planete Socialiste*, Switzerland
- Best European novel: A. Zinoviev: *Les Hauteurs beautes*
- Best European short story collection: J.G.Ballard: *Low-flying aircraft* (UK)
- Best European Magazine: *Futurs* (France)
- Best semiprofessionel magazine: *Orbit* (Holland)
- Best European fanzine: *Zikkurath* (Spain)
- Best European essay: *Le frontiere dell' ignoto* by V.Curtoni (Italy)
- Best European series: *La saga de los Aznar* by George H. White (Spain)
- Best illustrator: Chris Foss (England)
- Best European comic strip: *Mailis* by C.Auclair (France)
- Best film initiative: *The man who fell to Earth*
- Best theater initiative: *Sodomaquina* by C. Frabetti (Spain)
- Best European translator: Z. Zivkovic (Yugoslavia)

Belgian beer is actually fine, and besides, Carlsberg was available in the con area).

On the last day the inevitable prizes were given. The representatives in each country (ha ha) had previously been asked to nominate authors, books, anthologies etc., but since the system of representatives had broken down (for instance, nobody in Scandinavia or Holland had been hearing from Brussels) this really was a joke. No great wonder, then, that a large proportion of the prizes were given to Belgians. A complete list of the prizes given appears elsewhere in connection with this article.

One of the important things about a con is to get new contacts, new friends. We met some wonderful people from all over Europe, but apart from that we have to agree with one of the two Swedes, Mr. Kjell Borgström, who on the fourth day came up to our table with a solemn look on his face and said, "I have now decided what I think about this convention. I find it *tråkig*! (boring)".

We think it's crucial, in future Eurocon work, not to lose the East European countries. The tendency for them to be lost in the process has been all too pronounced recently (Eurocon IV attracted 3 Poles, a couple

of Soviet representatives, a Hungarian couple, 1 Roumanian (Ian Hobana), and 1 DDR representative) and the result is predictable: plans are being made for an East con. To avoid a total split we feel it's mandatory to have Eurocon VI take place in an Eastern country. To some Europeans it would seem a matter of course that Eurocon V, the next one, should not be held in a Western country (or how about somewhere in Scandinavia?), but since the Italian committee was already in full swing it would be stupid to interfere. Besides, they give the impression of being very active and very good organisers. They don't seem willing to allow a communications breakdown to ruin the thing. A number of national representatives have been selected - look at the list below, there may be one in your country.

The fifth European Science Fiction Convention (Eurocon V) will take place in Stresa, Italy (on the shore of the Lago Maggiore) during 1 - 4 may 1980. The membership fees are as following:

SUPPORTING

5000 Italian Lira (this will get you all the publications and the membership card).

ATTENDING

12.000 Italian Lira until 31/6/79

18.000 Italian Lira until 31/12/79

25.000 Italian Lira from 1/1/80 and on.

Fantasy:

Best European series: Marabout (Belgium)

Best European anthologists: J. Goimard & R. Stragliati

Best European novel: *Foret Interdite* by Mircea Eliade (Roumania)

Best European short story collection: *Derriere le mur blanc* by E.C.Bertin

Best European magazine: *Terzo Occhio* (Italy)

Best semiprofessional magazine: *Cahiers Jean Ray* (Belgium)

Best European fanzine: *Odyssee* (Belgium)

Best European essay: *Un nouveau fantastique*, by J-B Baronian (Belgium)

Best European series: *Ananke* by Bob Morane

Best European illustrator: Gaston Bogaert (Belgium)

Best comic strip: *Il Dono* by R. Bonadimani (Italy)

Best film initiative: Paul Naschy (Spain)

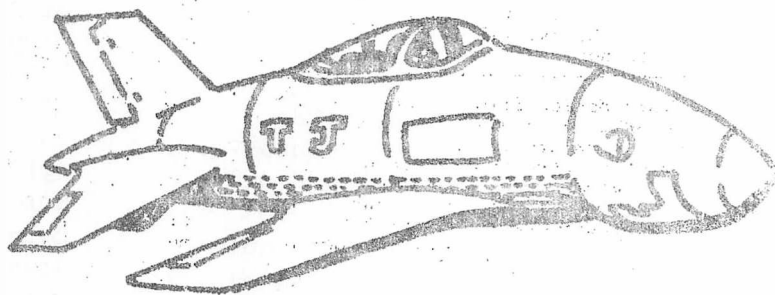
Best theater initiative: Slavomir Mrozek (Poland)

Best translator: R. Rambelli (Italy)

For further information contact your national representative or write the Stresa committee directly:

EUROCON 5
c/o Editrice Nord
Via Rubens 25
I-20148 Milano, Italy

Hope to see you all in Stresa!



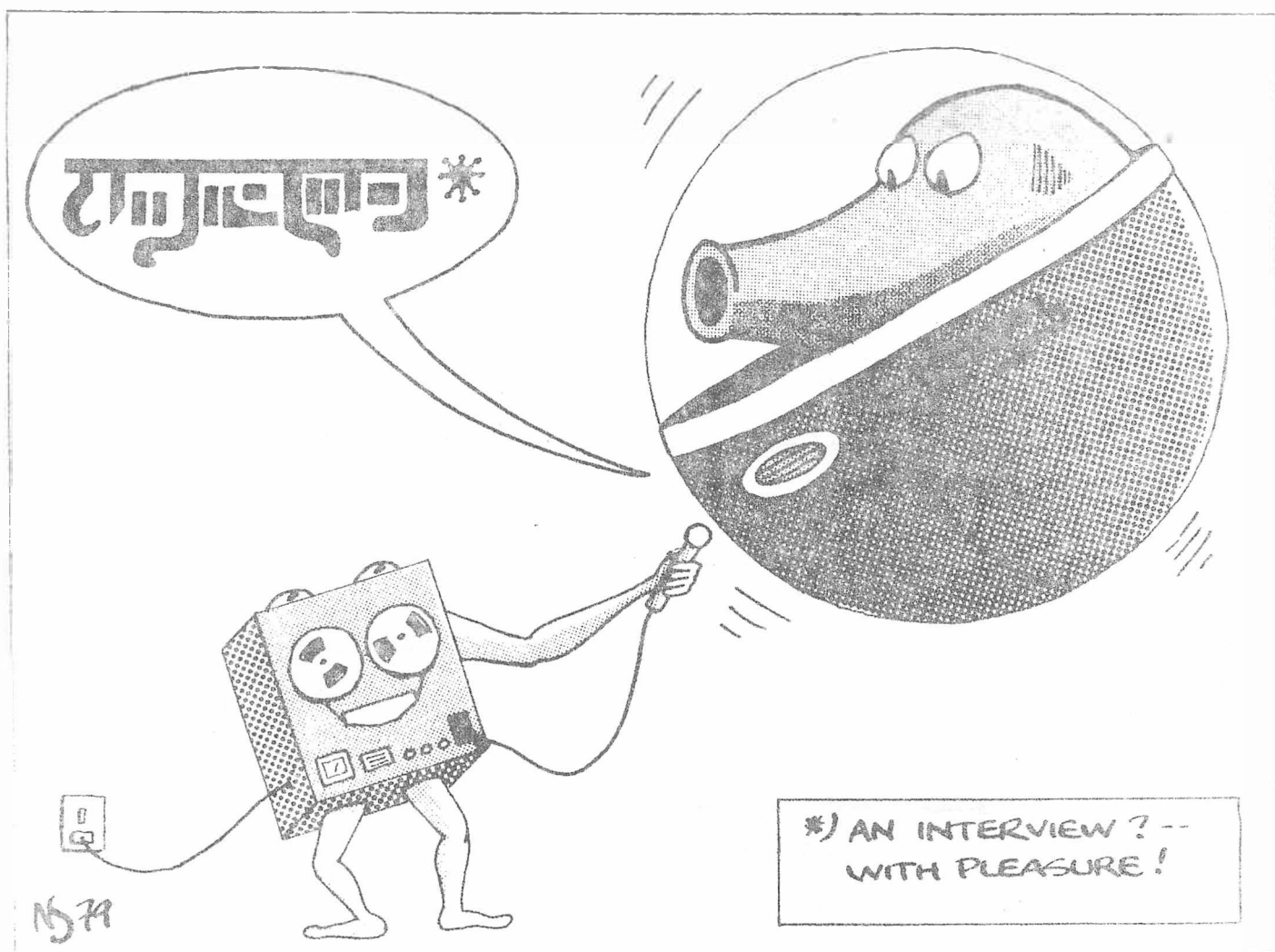
THE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Brian W. Aldiss, Eric Batard, Jon Bing, Vernon Brown, Czeslaw Chruszcewsky, Milan Codr, Jean-Paul Cronimus, Pascal Ducommon, Sezar Ergin Erkin, Herbert Franke, Bernard Goorden, Ion Hobana, Annemarie Kindt, Elka Kostantinova, Gunter Krupkat, Alexandr Kulascev, Kuczka Peter, Sam Lundwall, Isabel Meyrelles, Joseph Nesvadba, Erenej Parnov, Ellen Pedersen, Gian Filippo Pizzo, Heiner Rank, Franz Rottensteiner, Joseph Van den Borre, Manuel van Loggem, Pierre Versins, Luis Vigil, Gianfranco Viviani, Gavrigo, Zoran Zivkovic.

CritiFan

FEATURES A NEVER-BEFORE-PUBLISHED INTERVIEW

IN EVERY ISSUE !!!



CritiFan is a serconnish periodical featuring essays, interviews, analyses etc. about science fiction and its role in the world of today.

CritiFan is published three times a year by Tohubohu Press, Horsekildevvej 13, IV dør 3, DK-2500 Valby, Denamrk.

The next issue, which will be out soon, will feature (among other things) an interview with Frederik Pohl, an article by Patrick Parrinder (about science and social consciousness in modern sf), and a speech held by Eric Korn at the second science fiction writer's World Conference in Dublin last summer.

Issue no. 3, which is also in preparation, is to come out in June, and will be a special issue about the teaching of science fiction. So far contributions have been secured from James Gunn, Dr. Betty Hull and others.

How to get CritiFan: Send a cheque to the editorial adress. One issue is £ 1.25 or \$ 2.50, three issues are £ 3.00 or \$ 6.00, and six issues are £ 5.50 or \$ 11.00. That is, surface mail. Air mail prices are as follows: 1 year £ 4.50 or \$ 9.00, 2 years £ 7.75 or \$ 16.50. Don't forget to state from which issue you want your subscription to begin.

CritiFan is produced in attractive off-set and aims at serious criticism on a digestable level. Subscribe to CritiFan - the science fiction mind-stretcher!

Sf in Slovenia

by MATJAZ ŠINKOVEC

There is absolutely no way of discussing art outside the society that creates it. Therefore it is necessary to present, at least roughly, within what context speculative arts are developing in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as its name suggests, is a federal republic. It consists of six republics and two autonomous regions. Five different Slavic nations live within its borders. There are three official languages - Serbo-Croatian/Croatoserbian, Macedonian and Slovenian - in the Federation. Each republic or autonomous region gives full rights to the national minorities living there (e.g. in Slovenia the same rights are given to Italian and Hungarian as to Slovenian, the official language of the republic). As the different Yugoslavian regions had a different history, culture, etc. prior to the forming of Yugoslavia, the conditions under which the arts had been developing were different. This is still apparent today although the different nations have become close-tied by their brotherhood and unity. This is one of the reasons why we have to talk of science fiction in Slovenian, science fiction in Serbo-Croatian, etc. when talking of science fiction in Yugoslavia.

Our constitution, the basis of our society, supports the belief that there is no final truth; our basic law is not dogmatic at all.

Even during our National Liberation Struggle and the Revolution we were doing things that seemed impossible. This trend continued after the war when we were rebuilding our country, when we fought and defeated Stalinism. Our aims have always been far-

out out-of-sight things that nobody believed we, a multinational state, would achieve. Our aims really often looked not only far-fetched but also science fictionlike. As is the case with a lot of sf predictions, Yugoslavian wishes and plans have been realized too.

Yugoslavia is also one of the leading non-aligned nations, a society based on socialist self-management, and this fact is important when considering how open it is to the world. It is open to all peaceful freedom-loving nations and perhaps we can best see that in the availability of foreign press - be it "West" or "East" - on the newsstands. Foreign books (among which science fiction has an important place) are widely available and read.

In the past few years Yugoslavia has been hit by a science fiction boom. New books and magazines are mushrooming - I am exaggerating a bit...but not much. Fans have started organizing themselves in clubs ending the long solitary existence of avid sf readers. June last year saw the first

MATJAZ ŠINKOVEC

has studied English, Spanish, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and Tagalog. Part of his studies, from '71 to '73, took place in San Francisco, which is apparent from his spoken English. He has a MA degree, and is presently working on a translation of a short story by Borges. He and his girlfriend were the only Yugoslav representatives at Eurocon.

Yugoslavian meeting of sf fans and professionals in Zagreb, by some people called Yucon 1. It took place during the second Zagreb Science Fiction Fair. Zagreb is also the place where *Sirius*, the first Yugoslavian Science fiction monthly, is published. In Belgrade we are witnessing the birth of many sf books and the sf Almanac, called *Andromeda*. I would like to tell you more about science fiction in Yugoslavia, but my competence lies mostly in the Slovenian language region.

The Slovenian language is spoken by about two million people, living in Yugoslavia and the border regions of Italy and Austria. It is the third smallest book market in Europe. You are all aware of the consequences: books cannot be printed in big enough quantities to be inexpensive. As sf is mostly read by young people, they do not want - or can't - buy expensive hard cover books. When science fiction is published in such books it takes a long time to sell even 5000 copies of the book. Science fiction therefore cannot be very much appreciated by publishers who prefer books that sell fast. Science fiction publishing also is not subsidized by the Union of Cultural Communities as some other fields are. It would seem sf was in a bad spot.

But actually the situation is quite different. Speculative fiction is being read and published more in recent years than it used to be. Even "serious" publishers print a science fiction book now and then. Although usually they are not satisfied with it after it is published because they have to sell it through the Book Club at a lower price, they keep on publishing. There is even one publisher whose books are solely in the fields of science and science fiction. The same publisher edits a monthly magazine, called *Life and Science* (*Življenje in tehnika*) in which a science fiction story appears each month. There is another monthly magazine for kids, a do-it-yourself thing, which also includes a sf story in every issue. The same publisher has been thinking of a bimonthly magazine

which would be divided between science fiction and UFOlogy. The two major Slovenian dailies - *Delo* and *Ljubljanski dnevnik* also occasionally include a sf story. The Speculative Arts Association that I represent publishes a fanzine and an occasional collection of short stories in cheap book form ¹⁾. The Association also opened the first library in Yugoslavia solely dedicated to speculative fiction.

But perhaps the thing that has had the greatest impact on science fiction in Slovenia is the biggest selling Sunday paper. It is published in over 200.000 copies, which means that at least every ninth person in Slovenia buys it. It is read by about half of all Slovenian families. This paper started printing original Slovenian science fiction short stories eleven months ago. Perhaps the only criteria in the beginning was the correct length because there were all kinds of stories printed that critics didn't like at all, although there even were some jewels among them. Who are critics anyway - aren't they frustrated writers that can't sell their stuff? Well, the important thing is that people started taking science fiction as something completely normal..... because it is published in a family Sunday paper. A number of prolific writers sprang up and were discovered by the paper. I actually have no idea what the polls - if any - say... I do not know if a major part of the readers want those stories to be continued. But seeing the steps science fiction has taken in the past few years I sincerely hope the stories will not be discontinued next year.

I mentioned the paper is printed in over 200.000 copies. If it were published in the United States - comparing both markets - it would have around 25 million copies. How about that?

The majority of Slovenian publishers have united in a Pocket Book Club, dedicated to publishing inexpensive paperbacks. That happened less than two years ago. During this time two of their paperbacks were sf - one was *The Invincible* by Lem and the other *Star Wars*, which appeared right after

the movie started showing in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia. If they continue this way and are not discouraged by the many problems they are facing, more paperbacks and more sf will be published soon. These books reached 10.000 copies and for the first time were available even in most supermarkets. In Slovenia, 10.000 copies are a lot.

Similar efforts with paperbacks have been repeated several times during the last three decades, but none of them succeeded. One of the problems with Slovenian readers is that the better a book looks, the more expensive it is, the sooner they'll buy it. Beautiful books bound in leather with gold printed letters are a must. Wealthy buyers, when decorating their living rooms, like to buy a few meters of books in a suitable colour of binding. This would almost imply that we are a nation of illiterates, although history tells a different story. The first written record Slovenians have is a thousand years old and our first book was published 340 years before our first speculative novel.

Quite often one is faced with two extremes: expensive books and pulp novels, the latter mostly mysteries, westerns and novels about doctors. You know the kind - cheap in both meanings of the word. Between those two extremes, which are widely bought, if not read (the former type), come paperbacks. Paperbacks do not seem "real" books to many people. They are mostly bought by young people who have graduated from dime novels and are not quite ready for the expensive books. We'll see how things turn with this problem. Someone might be able to tell you the next chapter of this story at the next convention....

The first Slovenian Science Fiction book was published in 1891. Well, we can't actually call it science fiction because at the time the term did not exist at all. It is a utopia or anti-utopia about life in a future Ljubljana. The title of this political satire is *4000* and it was written by Ivan Tavcar, one of our major authors. The Ljubljana of the year 4000 is an extrapolation of the ideas of an im-

portant religious leader of the time, an enemy of the writer. It is funny in parts and has a semi-tragic but necessary conclusion. Just like Swift's or More's works it is full of social criticism and wit.

Many other Slovenian serious writers wrote fantasy works, even our greatest writer Ivan Cankar. Our modern science fiction was born after the war with all the new technology flooding our country and amazing writers. Today we consider Vid Pečjak, a psychology university professor, our most important sf writer - he also wrote the best juvenile sf novel so far. This novel is still read and reread by sf fans of all ages, mostly because of its warm, humanistic description of visiting Martian kids.

The major part of science fiction and fantasy books published in Slovenia are translations of foreign works - mostly American and British, as is the case, I believe, in most countries. Among the authors whose books have been translated in recent times are: Vonnegut, Clarke, Lem, Sheckley, Heinlein and Lucas....

Our Speculative Arts Association has been trying to popularize the term "speculative" in place of "science" We do not know how successful we have been but when we talk of speculative fiction ourselves, we usually still call it science fiction.

One of the problems we are facing is quite funny. The Slovenian word for science fiction is actually science fantasy (*znanstvena fantastika*) which also implies "fantastic science". This is why people often mix science fiction with the pseudo-scientific writings of Erich von Däniken, Charles Berlitz, et al. So when somebody finds out you are into science fiction he immediately thinks you are trying to prove the existence of UFO's which means you are not a very serious person, are you?

Beside "les belles lettres" science fiction movies are also popular in Slovenia, especially in Ljubljana, the capital. While we have not made any of our own, foreign sf movies are seen by many more people than there are sf fans. When old favourites are shown for the fifth, or tenth time in years

tickets are usually sold out. The two major movies of this kind are *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Solaris*. Most of the people that watch these films are real hard core sf fans.

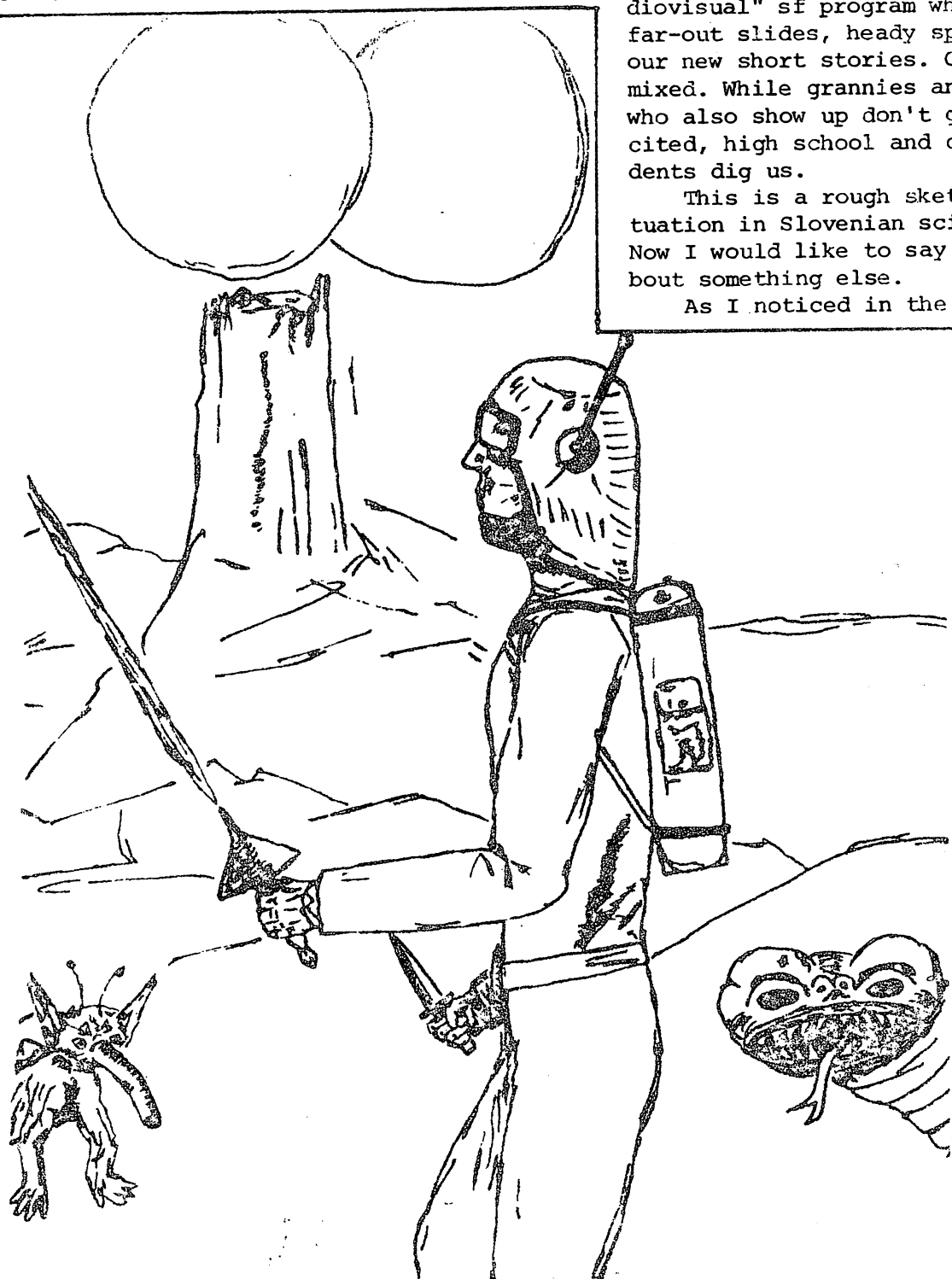
Ljubljana and Koper TV stations quite often include sf movies - some fairly new and some old ones like *It Came From Outer Space*. About ten years ago Ljubljana TV also produced an o-

riginal children's sf series. It was very good, even to the tastes of older persons, although it bore a vague resemblance to *Star Trek*. Two radio stations - Ljubljana I and Radio Student both sometimes dedicate some time to fantasy and science fiction stories.

The club I belong to often visits youth clubs and schools with an "audiovisual" sf program which includes far-out slides, heady space music and our new short stories. Our success is mixed. While grannies and little kids who also show up don't get quite excited, high school and college students dig us.

This is a rough sketch of the situation in Slovenian science fiction. Now I would like to say some words about something else.

As I noticed in the booklet invi-



ting to the fourth European Science Fiction Convention in Brussels, someone found out a few years ago that "Europe is not only West but also East". If we are really, realistically, in an unbiased way, talking about the Europe of today - we should realize that Europe is not only Western and Eastern but also non-aligned and neutral nations (actually forming a quarter of all European countries),²⁾ I am saying that Europe is *one*. When we consider it that way, borders and ideological differences are not that important. Also: Europe is not only English, French, German and Russian, but a number of other languages. When we are talking of European science fiction we should consider it in all the different variants, languages, societies because they are all European and equally important even though there may be 100 times more books published each year in English than in Slovenian.

We should not allow that farce - the World Convention that actually sees only one language - English - change even the European Convention into a meeting of people speaking and writing in one of the "important" languages. Let us ensure that even the "little guys" enjoy the same rights. Today this could happen to science fiction....the day....well, one of the days after tomorrow this might happen to some other things in the world.

Perhaps I have no right to speak about science fiction in different European countries when I don't know much European science fiction beside British, Russian, French, Polish, a bit of Italian and Hungarian. I know it is hard to get to know the "esoteric" literature of some little out-of-the-way country, but I claim it is important. It should be a way of life in post-Helsinki Europe³⁾. Let's get to know each other! Aren't we actually saying the same thing? We'll never know if we don't start reading each other. I believe, I earnestly believe that science fiction is one of the fields where our opinions could be very close. Aren't we quite often trying in our writings to present a different world of tomorrow....a dif-

ferent world where there will not be so much suspicion among nations? Yes, my talking can sound naïve, because utopias so easily become anti-utopias, our future worlds dark and less inviting than the one we are living in now. But there truly is something important in our meeting here. While the *détente* is in a crisis and a new cold war lurking in the shadows we are meeting here with a mutual thought: We all love science fiction (at least I believe that is the case, otherwise....) We can build on from here.

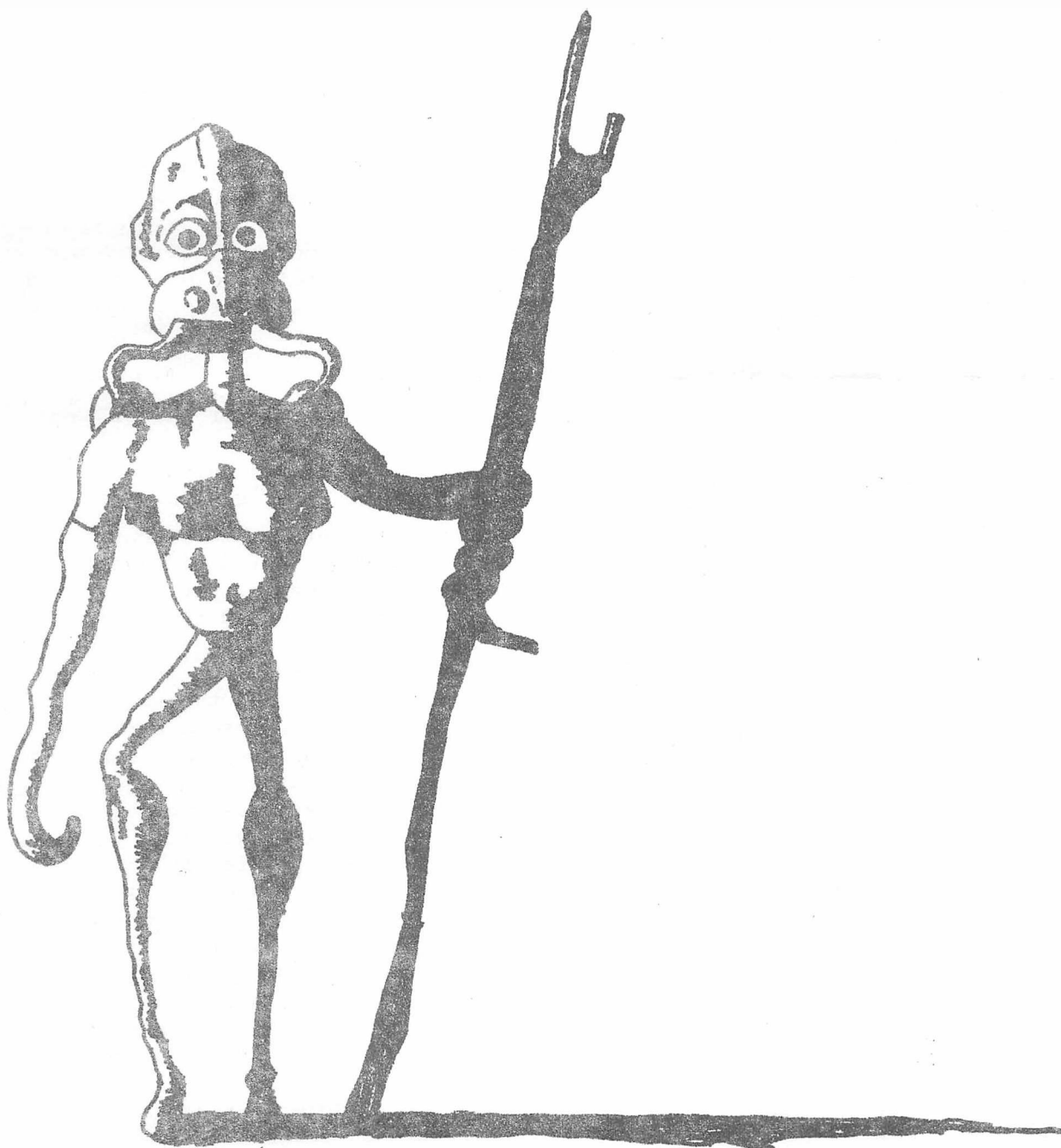
NOTES (By the Editors):

- 1) One such anthology was presented at Eurocon, entitled *From Bradbury to Vonnegut*.
- 2) Matjaz found occasion to stress this point several times during the con. And much to the chagrin of peaceloving non-aligneds, the committee for the next Eurocon is perpetuating the mistake. Communications with national committees are being taken care of by two committee members - one for the East and one for the West. To make the job easier for these agents, the editors have the following suggestion:

Devide Europe in two by a line running along the 10th meridian east of Greenwich, from Trondheim in Norway, through Skaw, all the way down to the capital of Tunisia. This would lump social-democratic Denmark with the East, since Copenhagen would be east of the line. Among the nonaligneds, Sweden would be east, Ireland west, Yugoslavia east and (most of) Switzerland west, whereas Malta, after being relieved of its British influence, would be far east. So would Italy, by the way, going by the relative position of Rome.

And then let's have the protestant king of liberal-social democratic Sweden speak on behalf of the "East". The Norwegians would have to decide for themselves, but then, with voting to stay out of the EEC they seem perfectly capable of doing just that.

- 3) Helsinki, the Finnish capital is where, in 1978, an agreement was ratified concerning human rights. The UN were in charge.



1577

Turning Point

by STEEN KNUDSEN

The solar system was getting too small.

When the first men left the protection of Mother Earth, the possibilities had seemed endless. Eight planets with satellites, an unknown number of asteroids, comets etc., all waiting to be explored.

Naturally, this job was not finished in just a few hundred years, but the challenge had gone out of it. The Moon, Mars and the biggest asteroids now had thriving, selfsupporting colonies. Each of the gas giants were accompanied by at least one manned research station.

Even the burning hell of Venus had been visited, albeit briefly, by an armored, manned descend vehicle. Most of the crude ore of steel, titanium, beryllium etc. came from the asteroids. Even the heavy-metal deposits on Mercury were mined on a commercial basis.

Earth's enormous thirst for raw energy was satisfied by microwave from solar power stations in high orbit.

The big, cylindrical colonies at the Earth-Moon system's Lagrangian Points had lost their glamour. Now their only claim to fame was that they housed the only five A.I.'s left.

A.I., Artificial Intelligence, had been a big issue in the later half of the 21st century. Only a dozen had been created, all technological marvels. Unfortunately they were not the metal giants hoped for. Totally without feelings, compassion, intuition or humor, they were exactly what their name indicated, pure but artificial intelligences. True, they never tired, they could and did ponder a problem

for years and had a few times provided some startling answers. On the other hand they could come up with a quick solution in a sudden, catastrophic situation.

Still, it could all be done in cheaper ways using good old fashioned teamwork between a human and a more conventional computer. A.I. was a dead end. Not absolutely useless, but without any real justification. Some had simply been turned off (A murder charge had at one time been taken to court. Case dismissed). And yet, maybe there was a task for one of them now.

It was the torch ships that had opened up the Solar system. The end of the 20th century had produced the physically small but unbelievably powerful fusion reactor. It came too late to save the world from it's own follies of pollution and malnutrition, but half a century later it gave old Earth ready access to the rest of the system. The fusion motors were powered by heavy hydrogen, deuterium, and used ordinary hydrogen as reaction mass. Hydrogen was easy to get in all parts of the solar system.

A spaceship powered by a fusion reactor got from planet to planet by accelerating until the halfway point, building up speed all the way, then turning over and decelerating for the second half of the journey. The glowing plasma leaving the ship formed a huge, torch-like flame, hence the name.

By the middle of the 22th century a constant acceleration of 0.1 G, i.e. one tenth Earth normal, was quite common. The Earth-Mars run could be done

in one or two weeks, depending on their mutual positions. Even distant Pluto could be reached in less than two months.

The solar system was getting downright crowded!

The stars began to look tempting and not impossibly far away. With a constant 0.1 G it would be possible to reach the nearest star of interest, Alpha Centauri, in about 13 1/2 years. The relativistic time-dilation effect would cut more than one year off ship time.

At midpoint, when the ship had to be turned over to start decelerating, it would travel at more than half the speed of light, 0.58 C to be exact.

Fuel would be the main problem. An idea dating from the pre-space age had been revived and tried out. Collect and compress the interstellar hydrogen with electromagnetic fields. Separate the deuterium for the fusion process, use the rest as reaction mass. A few heavier elements thrown in would hardly be noticed.

This interstellar ramscoop jet actually worked. That is, up to a certain point.

The first unmanned probe had been dispatched in 2147. Shortly after passing by the orbit of Pluto it had exhausted its reserves of fuel, but it was then moving at more than 1 % of the speed of light, enough for the ramjet effect to start. All seemed to go well until midpoint where the ship had to turn over.

Communication with the probe at that time was strictly one-way: from probe to the gigantic radio telescopes in orbit beyond Uranus. The probe had not been able to receive past its own

flaming tail for a long time. In fact, it was by manipulation of the drive, setting up travelling instabilities in the raging hot plasma, causing it to emit megawatts of power in the microwave band, that the probe could send its reports back to Earth.

The drive was to be shut down during the actual turn-around, scheduled to take less than half an hour. The last report prior to the dampening of the fusion process stated simply: all clear. Nothing was ever heard from it again.

The next probe was instructed to start up the drive in communication mode. At the expected time a signal was received, but it was only a burst of noise a few milliseconds long. No data.

The third probe started the drive on as low power as possible. Consequently the signal was very weak. It took all the sophistication of the big, cryogenic computers on the Moon's far-side to filter it out of the noise. Nearly half a second of data, more than two megabits. All garbled, it simply could not be true. Speed several times that of light. Nonsense.

Up until now the probes had been turned over through the use of small auxiliary rocket motors. The fourth probe would use the drive itself to produce the turnaround. A slight modification of the magnetic fields that confined the plasma stream, and the direction of thrust would be offset a little from the ship's axis. No big power was needed, so the drive could be kept going in communications mode during the entire manoeuvre.

It was never finished, contact was lost within ten minutes. But the recording of those last signals became

Steen Knudsen, 34, a computer scientist and a friend of ours, in 1977 won a short story contest arranged by the Science Fiction Circle of Denmark. His story later was voted best story of the year for 1977. The story we present here is Steen's first English one. We have given it a gentle editing, but retained Steen's Americanisms.

Turning Point was originally intended for publication in Carsten Schiøler's international fanzine *Slan*, which sadly never reached publication.

the most deeply analyzed set of data ever. The very last reading *could* be interpreted as a doppler effect indicating an acceleration approaching infinity.

Einstein's original equations had never been seriously challenged. They had stood the test in the big accelerators at near light velocities, but only on a scale of atomic dimensions. On the scale of the solar system with velocities in the kilometer pr. second range, the effect was only noticed in the orbit of Mercury.

The star probes were the first "experiments" that used a mass of several hundred tons, moving at more than half the speed of light. What had happened to the last one, *Challenger*?

Only one explanation seemed to make any sense. The combination of big mass and high velocity gave some hitherto unnoticed effect a chance to show up. But then again, why exactly at turnaround? Someone pointed out that this was the only time for the direction of thrust to be changed drastically.

It was then that a new proposal was put forward. Send off a new probe, "man" it with an A.I., let it build up an even higher velocity and attempt the turnover very slowly.

The discussion went on for a long time, but the end result was given. One of the A.I.'s volunteered, the oldest one in fact. In 2264 the probe was finished. Nominally the target was to be Epsilon Eridani, 10.5 light years distant. Nobody took any notice, it was the turnover itself that was the point of interest.

Ten years after the launch the probe had reached midpoint and a velocity of .76 C. The time-dilation effect was now quite pronounced. Probe-time was only 60% of Earth-time, with a high doppler effect. Throughout the entire solar system, people watched a direct transmission of the event. Since the distance was five light years there was a five year delay. Still, it was being watched by everybody who had a chance to.

The A.I. provided a sort of running commentary. No speech, text only. A more precise story was told by a

steady stream of data, but it was that slowly unfolding text that most people concentrated on.

- 2 MIN. TO TURNING POINT. ALL OK.

The holographic projectors showed a computer simulation of the probe behind the text. The stars ahead were visibly of a brighter blue than those astern. Which was quite correct, just one more of the relativistic effects, except that the producer had exaggerated just a little.

- 30 SEC. LEFT. STARTING HIGH SPEED DATA SCAN.

If an alien had invaded the solar system in a faster-than-light ship, it would have had to shout real loud to be noticed right then.

- ZERO: MIDPOINT PROCEDURE INITIATED.

From then on it was a flood of data, everything proceeding as expected.

- + 12 MIN. ANGLE 7° NO UNEXPECTED EFFECT.

Challenger had reached 9.2° before contact was lost.

- +15 MIN. ANGLE 9° PROGRAMMED WAIT AND HOLD FOR THOROUGH CHECK ALL OK.

- 18 MIN. PROCEEDING ALL SYSTEMS POSITIVE.

- +20 MIN. ANGLE 9.2° CRITICAL VALUE NOTHING TO REPORT.

- +22 MIN. ANGLE 9.4° THRUST HOLDING STEADY.

All other data seemed right too. Later analysis did not show anything out of the ordinary either. Maybe, just maybe....

- + 25 MIN. ANGLE 10.3° NOTHING TO REPO

There the flow of text stopped. The other, automatic data channels kept on, suddenly reporting crazy values, the doppler effect especially shooting upwards so the receivers were hard pressed to compensate. The A.I. came back with one last message.

- YE GOD LORD OF THE FLIES EINSTEIN WRONG CITAT P 214 ONLY HUM

Contact was ultimately lost right then in the middle of a word, "human" probably.

Then all Hell broke loose. What did the A.I mean by that last message? As all the other A.I.s it had never shown any trace of feelings,

nor any tendency to use anything but strictly formal and correct language.

The reference to Einstein was the easiest part. That is, some bright historian first had to figure out that p 214 meant page 214 in some old-fashioned book, not a cryptic address-code to an info-bank.

It seemed to be a contribution to an old debate about the possibility of ever understanding the inner workings of the universe, the deepest, underlying foundations of the physical laws.

"I believe that God may be subtle, but I don't think he is malicious."

The standard interpretation was that though it might prove difficult to figure out the ultimate, physical laws, it would not be impossible.

But it was the first part of the message that caused the biggest uproar. *Lord of the Flies* was one of the old, honorary titles for the Devil, Old Nick himself. One interpretation of the whole message was temptingly easy. The probe had met Lucifer in person and had been destroyed in the process. Humankind was not supposed to leave their home-ground, the solar system. More than one biblethumping, fire-and-brimstone preaching sect got started immediately. The official churches tried to avoid expressing any firm opinions. The archbishop of Mars re-opened the old question of whether an A.I. had a soul.

The opposition pointed out that this story had been heard before, medieval charts populated the far seas with monsters, flight with machines heavier than air had been proved impossible (and when they did arrive, some were of the opinion that if God had meant man to fly, He would have provided him with wings), spaceflight had been opposed on many different grounds, all later proven meaningless.

Once more the outcome of all the hue and cry was predictable. The first manned interstellar ship was built in record time. Nobody doubted that it would be a suicide mission, but there were no lack of volunteers. Again turn-around would be done through the use of auxiliary rockets. During the manoeuvre, all power from the fusion

reactor would go to a battery of infrared lasers. That way it would be possible to maintain communication during turn-around without using the drive at all.

In 2281 *St. Maria* left the boundaries of the solar system. The acceleration was a steady 0.15 G. Turn-over was scheduled to take place as soon as 80 % of the speed of light had been reached. That would take a little more than 8 1/2 years Earth-time. Unboard it would be just over 7 years.

The control room, the bridge, was at the center of the ship. The idea was to give it a maximum of protection, though any failure of nearly any system at all would be fatal.

Ten minutes before the computed starting time, the captain gave the long awaited order.

"Shut down drive."

The false gravity slowly disappeared, and the ship was in free fall. The fusion reactor kept going as planned on a stored reserve, enough to last two days.

"Start com-lasers".

The communications officer executed a complicated series of adjustments.

"Lasers working and transmitting".

The captain himself flipped away a transparent cover, and pressed the first of three red buttons.

"High speed data transfer started."

A holographic coverage of the bridge was included in that stream. The second button was pressed.

"Turn-around initiated".

All aboard *St. Maria*, 15 persons, all on the elderly side, seemed literally to be holding their breath.

What happened then was a sort of anticlimax. Nothing drastic, no host of angels (and/or devils) were seen projected against the distorted sky, no pearly gates opened up, just a gentle voice.

"Welcome."

The voice belonged to a gentleman standing in the middle of the room. There had been no roll of thunder, nor any puff of smoke. Most of all he looked like the popular conception of a greek god, white robe, long beard and all.

"Excuse me my unconventional attire, but I'm not up to date on that part of your culture I'm afraid. I do hope the language at least is correct."

Even in his state of shock the captain was inching his finger toward the third button, emergency restart of the drive. Their new passenger noticed the movement.

"Don't do that. It's a nuisance already to have to adjust my sense of time because of your ridiculously high prime-space velocity. If you start accelerating again, it gets even more complicated."

For a few seconds nobody said anything. Not because of lack of questions, nor did it seem to be fear, but where to begin?

"Who are you?" It was the man in front of the reactor-display console. The captain whispered one word, but no one seemed to notice him, "Zeus".

The man (or god?) smiled.

"That does not matter. You are much more interesting. Honestly, we had not expected to see you out here quite so soon. That's why the position as guardian was given to a rather inexperienced trainee. I'm afraid he became irritated by your earlier probes, and sort of swatted them away."

The communications officer groaned. "Swatted! Lord of the Flies!" Amazingly the visitor seemed to understand the reference. He looked concerned.

"That was an error, and the reason why I'm here. What you call an A.I. was a sentient being, and what happened is unforgivable. Still, the guard was thoroughly provoked. Apparently you have no idea of the hideous racket it makes in secondary space, when you reverse or just change the direction of thrust at these velocities. That reminds me. Why do you insist on staying here in prime-space?"

He looked around. No one seemed inclined to answer.

"If you don't like the naked look of secondary space, and many sentient races simply can't stand it, why, just turn off your viewscreens during the passage."

The captain looked puzzled. "Prime-space. Passage. What are you talking about?"

"Zeus" blinked his eyes. "Surely you know about secondary space. I caught the much more advanced concept of hyperspace from someone, when I arrived. Even we don't use that for pleasure travel."

It was the astrophysicist's turn to look shamefaced.

"Uh, sorry. That's just a word from the dawn of the space age. A sort of hobby of mine. Hyperspace is only fantasy, a nonsense word. The loss of our probes was the first indication we have had for ages that Einstein is not the final word."

Now Zeus looked very flustered. "My, have I ever blundered. Permit me." He got a look of intense concentration.

Later inspection of the visual record showed that the astrophysicist went sort of glassy-eyed at the same time. His memory had been rifled.

"My sincere apology. I misjudged the situation completely. You really are primitive, no offense please. But trying to go to the stars in prime-space. Crazy."

Obviously the crew were not quite sure whether that was a praise or not. Zeus went on.

"You see, this does raise a problem. Now you know about the existence of more advanced civilizations before you have the proper means to go and visit them. You have to do that yourselves, you know. Prove your abilities, sort of."

Zeus toyed with his beard. "Damn it, you have broken the rules just by being here. So have I for that matter. Sorry, you will have to sort it out for yourselves I'm afraid".

Nobody broke the silence that followed. The alien noticed that the communications officer kept fiddling with her console.

"You can stop that. There is no ship to detect. What you see here is just a solid state projection. You might not like my actual appearance anyway."

He lifted his right arm, "But for now, goodbye," and was gone. Just like that.

When the laser signals arrived back in the solar system 8 1/2 years later they created a sensation, to put it very mildly. At one place the

public re-transmission was followed with even more than usual attention.

In the only sizeable room at the gamma-ray observatory on Persephone, 22 people were assembled. It was probably the loneliest spot in the system, this Pluto's only moon. The program finished with the tragic statement that contact was lost a few seconds after the disappearance of the "visitor".

After a few seconds' pause an elderly gentleman asked, "Do you think they will be fooled?" The group obviously regarded it as a rhetorical question, because nobody answered directly.

It was a woman that next broke the silence. "They will, they want to. This conspiracy has been kept secret now for over a hundred years. In fact, ever since the still mysterious loss of the first two probes gave our captain the idea." It was the "communications officer".

The "captain" did not look his 127 years, but then he had lived most of his life in low gravity environments and always kept in perfect health. Now he nodded at the "astrogator", that looked as if he was going to burst apart from internal pressure.

"Ok, so this is only a small detail, but it has been nagging me all these eight years. Was it the original and only set of tapes with our glori-

ous performance that went out with the probe? Are you sure a backup copy doesn't exist somewhere?"

"Yes, now I am," and that was all they could get him to say on that point.

"How did you persuade the A.I.? You have never told anyone that." It was the "reactor controller".

"Sorry to break an illusion. It was the A.I. that persuaded me. It seems that the capacity for original thought was not totally lacking. From where did you think all the fake data came anyway?"

This revelation could silence even this group that had just seen the end result of the biggest and most daring fraud in human history.

It took 20 years before the first crack was found in the foundations that Einstein had laid down all those many, too many, years ago.

Less than 10 years later a small sphere crossed the solar system in 27 seconds flat, moving by something called "macroscopic Quantum jumps".

The "captain" managed to live and watch the first true starship leave the system.

Man was going out to greet the gods again.

SHORT NEWS AT THE END OF THE DAY.....

We've reached the end of this issue, but before we go there's a few more things to be said. First, that the illustrations this time were by Terry Jeeves (pages 3 & 8), Søren Lerskov Larsen (page 13), and Niels Søndergaard (page 9). Next, those of you who read the article in *UniFan 1* about Fandom in Denmark might be interested to know that Denmark's only professional sf-magazine, *Science Fiction Magasinet*, has been more or less taken over by a group of active Danish fans. A new and better image is intended for the magazine, and some changes in editorial policy are being made. More news about this may follow in *UniFan 3*.

Last, we'd like to inform you that a university publication in English about science fiction has been produced by the Department of English, University of Copenhagen, Njalsgade 84-96, DK-2300 Copenhagen S (from where it may be obtained for the equivalent of about one pound sterling). It contains some of the papers given at *FABULA 77*, the Scandinavian Science Fiction Festival, about two years ago. Among the participants are Brian Aldiss, Philip José Farmer and Sam J. Lundwall.

And that's really all for now. See you in *UniFan 3*. Hi.

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